



# WYTHE Economic Development News

**JOINT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
OF WYTHE COUNTY, WYTHEVILLE, AND RURAL RETREAT**

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## Note from the Executive Director

Release of this issue of Wythe ED News was delayed in order to provide coverage of the Progress Park Lot 24 Completion Celebration Event. The Joint IDA was pleased to have local, regional, and state guests help celebrate the completion of grading and infrastructure construction for the large rail-served manufacturing site that is one of the premier construction-ready

sites with high capacity utility service—not just in Virginia, but in southeastern United States. (We were also pleased to have dry, sunny weather, which has been in short supply this summer.)

Although the characteristics of the site are exceptional, perhaps deserving equal recognition and appreciation is the vision, commitment, and tenacity of the leaders and citizens of Wythe County to undertake such a major investment in the future during the most challenging economy in generations. Significantly discounted construction costs and interest rates compared to those pre-recession helped, but significant courage and persistence were certainly required. This “can do” attitude was seen by our many partners that supported the project. The support of the many partners, especially the Virginia Tobacco Commission, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and the Virginia Department of Transportation, each investing significantly in the project, was critical to making Lot 24 a reality.

With dedicated marketing efforts and an improving economy, I trust we will be gathering again on Lot 24 soon to celebrate a new Progress Park tenant—one that will have an impact on the regional economy for the better part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Alan Hawthorne*

## Joint IDA Celebrates Completion of Lot 24

On September 10, the Joint IDA and Wythe County celebrated the long awaited completion of Progress Park’s Lot 24. After nearly four years of construction and with 3.5 million cubic yards of earth moved, the site development project will be complete this



month. Lot 24, the 232-acre site with its 166 acre graded pad and service from a Class 1 rail line, a 12-inch water line with service from two directions, three 138kV electric power lines, and three interstate natural gas lines, is the state’s premier greenfield site for large manufacturing projects.

Over 100 local business and community leaders and development partners gathered on the site for remarks by dignitaries including Wythe



**Dep. Sec. Mary Rae Carter**

County BOS Chair, Danny McDaniel, Delegate Anne B. Crockett-Stark, Mary Rae Carter, Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Tim Pfohl, Virginia Tobacco Commission, Mike Higgins, VP of Branch Highways, Inc., and Mike Lehmkuhler, VP of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. Enthusiasm ran high among both speakers and guests.

### In this issue . . .

**Note from the Executive Director . . . . . 1**

**Joint IDA Celebrates Completion of Lot 24 . . . . . 1**

**Kause Joint IDA Board of Directors . . . . . 2**

**WCC Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary . . . . . 2**

**Longwood Elastomers Featured in Rubber News . . 2**

**Evatran CEO Named Top Entrepreneur . . . . . 2**

**Regional Unemployment Rates . . . . . 2**

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## Kause Joins Joint IDA Board of Directors

David Kause is the Town of Wytheville's new appointee to the Joint IDA Board of Directors. Mr. Kause, who works as the Regional Transportation Manager at PepsiCo's Blue Ridge Gatorade facility, replaces Carolyn Dankowski, who recently moved away from the area.



*New board member David Kause*

Mr. Kause has a long history in the transportation and warehousing industry. Before joining PepsiCo, he served as Logistics/Transport Manager for Lipari Foods in Warren, MI; Director of Logistics at Franks Nursery & Crafts in Troy, MI; Regional Transportation Manager at Hunt-Wesson in Rossford, OH; and Distribution Center/Plant Warehouse Manager in Hunt-Wesson in Fullerton, CA.

Welcome to the Board, Dave. We look forward to working with you to improve the economic opportunities for Wythe County and its citizens.

## WCC Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

2013 marks an important year in the history of Wytheville Community College. The start of the fall semester marked the beginning of the college's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The college is planning a year-long celebration with the kick-off scheduled for Saturday, September 28. The September 28 event will include an Alumni Basketball game, an Open House, an Anniversary Celebration program with the induction of the first member of the Alumni Hall of Fame, a picnic, and a beach music concert.

## Longwood Elastomers Featured in *Rubber News*

Long time Wytheville manufacturer, Longwood Elastomers was the subject of a very positive feature article in the June issue of *Rubber News*.

The article mentions that the company has seen its profits recently grow by 50%. Longwood credits its sales growth to facility improvements and the addition of new qualified personnel. Part of the improvements include TS 16949 certification (automotive industry Quality Management Standard) and the purchase of new equipment. New personnel include members of the technical and quality control departments as well as new plant manager, James Anderson.

Longwood Elastomers, which operates two facilities located in Wytheville's Fairview Industrial Park, produces commercial products that include precision seals, air brake diaphragms, ride control elements, and stabilizer bar bushings for the automotive and rail industries.

## Evatran CEO Named Top Entrepreneur

Rebecca Hough, CEO of Evatran, has been named to *Inc. Magazine's* 2013 30 Under 30 list. The 30 Under 30 list honors America's top young entrepreneurs and their companies.

Evatran has developed a wireless charging system, Plugless Power, for electric cars. In addition to its current focus of aftermarket distribution of its system, Evatran is working with auto manufacturers to integrate their plugless technology into mass-market electric vehicles as an OEM option.

Evatran's manufacturing division is located in Wytheville, Virginia. The corporate offices are located in Richmond, Virginia, and its technical center is in Raleigh, North Carolina.

## Regional Unemployment Rates

Location	Apr-12	Apr-13	May-12	May-13	Jun-12	Jun-13
Wythe	6.5%	6.0%	6.3%	6.4%	6.9%	6.7%
Bland	5.6%	4.7%	5.5%	5.6%	6.5%	6.2%
Smyth	8.4%	8.8%	8.6%	9.1%	8.9%	8.8%
Carroll	8.1%	7.0%	7.9%	7.7%	8.7%	8.0%
Grayson	9.6%	8.9%	8.6%	8.9%	8.3%	9.2%
Pulaski	5.9%	5.7%	6.7%	6.2%	7.2%	6.4%
Galax	9.4%	8.6%	7.6%	8.2%	8.5%	9.0%
Region*	7.4%	7.0%	7.4%	7.4%	7.9%	7.6%
Virginia	5.5%	5.0%	5.8%	5.6%	6.2%	5.9%
US	7.7%	7.1%	7.9%	7.3%	8.4%	7.8%

\* Overall rate for the region including the Counties of Wythe, Bland, Smyth, Carroll, Grayson, and Pulaski, and the City of Galax.

## Presentations Available

If your civic or other community group would like to have a presentation on Progress Park or on Wythe County economic development in general, please contact the Joint IDA office to schedule a presentation for your organization.

**Wythe Economic Development News** is published quarterly by the Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County to inform interested parties of industrial development activities in the county and its incorporated towns. If you are not on the distribution list and would like to be added, please let us know at [JointIDA@wytheville.org](mailto:JointIDA@wytheville.org) or call (276) 223-3370.